

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A virtual world system, comprising:

a server computer;

a plurality of terminal computers connected to said server computer, wherein avatars of operators of said plurality of terminal computers are displayed in a virtual world generated on said server computer, and are caused to act on the basis of operations by the operators of said plurality of terminal computers, each of said plurality of terminal computers being operable to make an object having a predetermined data format available on said terminal computer to be controlled by the operations by the operator of said terminal computer when the operator solves a problem presented during execution of a first program on said terminal computer, said first program being executable independently from execution of a second program for displaying the object in the virtual world, each of said plurality of terminal computers including a control unit operable to permit the operator of said terminal computer to participate in said virtual world by transmitting information regarding the operations by the operator to said server computer and, under control of the operator of said terminal computer, transmitting the object to said server computer,

wherein said server computer includes

an object storage unit operable to store a plurality of the objects transmitted from ones of said plurality of terminal computers in association with information identifying the operators of said ones of said plurality of terminal computers; and

object display means operable to display the stored plurality of objects in the virtual world on said plurality of

terminal computers on the basis of the operations by the operators identified by the stored identifying information, using the information regarding the operations received from said plurality of terminal computers.

2-6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) A recording medium as claimed in Claim 21, wherein said method further comprises:

permitting the player to access the server computer and to participate in the virtual world generated by the server computer, said step of displaying the object including displaying at least a portion of the virtual world; and

making the object available for control by the player in the virtual world.

8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) A recording medium as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said method further comprises:

setting an attribute for the object which is transmitted to the server computer; and

determining a mode in which the operator uses the object in the virtual world based on the attribute.

10-18. (cancelled)

19. (previously presented) A server computer, comprising:

an object record area operable to store object data concerning objects displayable in a virtual world, the object data being stored in conformity with a predetermined data format;

a virtual world control unit operable to generate the virtual world and to output object display information to participant terminals in communication with said server computer

for controlling display of the objects in the virtual world on the participant terminals in accordance with operations by operators of the participant terminals;

a communication control unit operable to receive the object data and information regarding the operations by the operators from the participant terminals, the object data including objects awarded to operators of the participant terminals during execution of first programs on the participant terminals, the first programs being executable independently from second programs executable to display the virtual world,

wherein the object record area is operable to store the received object data in association with information identifying the operators of ones of the participant terminals having transmitted the object data, and

the virtual world control unit is operable to output the object display information for display of the objects using the object data stored in the object record area in accordance with the received information regarding the operations by the operators and the stored information identifying the operators.

20. (previously presented) An information processor, comprising:

a control unit operable to execute a game application to enable interactive game play by a player, and upon execution of the game application, to present a problem to the player and award an object to the player when the player solves the problem, the object having a predetermined data format, the control unit further being operable to execute a second application independently from executing the game application to display the object together with other items with which the object interacts in a virtual world facilitated by a server computer; and

a communication control unit operable to transmit the object and information concerning operations by the player to the server computer in association with information identifying the player for incorporation of the object in the virtual world and to receive from the server computer information for displaying the object together with the other items in accordance with the operations by the player.

21. (previously presented) A recording medium having information recorded thereon for performing a method of handling an object for incorporation in a virtual world and displaying the object, the method comprising:

executing a game application by an information processor to enable interactive game play by a player including presenting a problem to the player and awarding an object to the player when the player solves the problem, the object having a predetermined data format;

transmitting the object from the information processor to a server computer;

transmitting first information concerning first operations by the player from the information processor to the server computer;

incorporating the object in a virtual world generated by the server computer in accordance with the first information and second information regarding second operations by an operator of at least one other information processor in communication with the server computer; and

executing a second application independently from said execution of the game application to display the object at the information processor using information received from the server computer regarding the virtual world, wherein the information

received from the server computer takes into account the first information and the second information.

22. (previously presented) A virtual world system, comprising:

a server computer operable to generate a virtual world; and

a plurality of participant terminals in communication with the server computer, each participant terminal including

a terminal display unit operable to execute a first program to display an image including a plurality of objects of the virtual world and to enable an operator at the participant terminal to interact with the virtual world,

an object providing unit operable to make an object having a predetermined format, of the plurality of objects included in the image, available on the participant terminal to be controlled by the operations by the operator of the participant terminal when the operator solves a problem presented during execution of a second program on the terminal computer, the second program being executable independently from the first program, and

a communication unit operable to transmit an object selected by the operator of the participant terminal to the server computer,

and the server computer including

a storage unit operable to receive the selected object and to store the selected object in association with information identifying the operator of the participant terminal from which the selected object was transmitted, and

a server display unit operable to generate information for display of stored virtual objects in the virtual world by the participant terminals on the basis of operations by the

operators identified by the stored identifying information, the operations being communicated from the participant terminals to the server computer, wherein the communication unit of each participant terminal is operable to receive the information generated by the server display unit, and the terminal display unit of each participant terminal is operable to generate the image using the information received from the server display unit.

23. (currently amended) A method of handling an object for incorporation in a virtual world and display of the object, comprising:

executing a game application by an information processor to enable interactive game play by a player including presenting a problem to the player and awarding an object to the player when the player solves the problem, the object having a predetermined data format;

transmitting the object from the information processor to a server computer;

transmitting first information concerning first operations by the player from the information processor to the server computer;

incorporating the object in a virtual world generated by the server computer in accordance with the first information and second information regarding second operations by an operator of at least one other information processor in communication with the server computer; and

executing a second application independently from said execution of the game application to display ~~displaying~~ the object at the information processor using information received from the server computer regarding the virtual world, wherein

the information received from the server computer takes into account the first information and the second information.

24. (previously presented) A virtual world system as claimed in claim 1, wherein an object made available by said terminal computer to the operator during execution of the first program is not defined in the virtual world prior to the execution of the first program.